

IN OPPOSITION TO H.R. 2804 AND
H.R. 899

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2804, the so-called "All Economic Regulations are Transparent (ALERT) Act and H.R. 899, the so-called "Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act."

This week, the House took up a series of rehashed bills—under the guise of the "Stop Government Abuse Week"—that would limit the ability of federal agencies to enforce commonsense rules and regulations. While supporters of H.R. 2804 and H.R. 899 claim they are needed to curb overregulation, in reality, they would prevent federal agencies from doing their jobs and working to ensure there are safeguards in place to protect consumer health and safety.

My Republican colleagues contend that the two bills before us are a response to the "tsunami" of regulations under the Obama Administration. However, this is simply not true. In fact, federal agencies under President Obama have issued significantly less rules during his first four years in office when compared to President Bush's first term. Moreover, the ALERT Act would actually create more red tape by imposing unnecessary new procedures on agencies and adding over 60 new barriers in the federal rulemaking process.

Much like the ALERT Act, H.R. 899 would also introduce uncertainty into agency decision-making and undermine the ability of agencies to provide critical public health and safety protections. It would also weaken our democracy by giving powerful special interests and private industry an unfair advantage in the rulemaking process. Specifically, it would require agencies to consult with private industry—but not most other stakeholders, such as public health or food safety experts—before proposing rules.

I was disappointed that amendments offered by Representative CUMMINGS and Representative CONNOLLY were not adopted. Rep. CUMMINGS' amendment would have overturned a provision in the bill that directly compromises the autonomy of independent regulatory agencies—including the CFPB, SEC, and CPSC—by requiring that they report proposed rules to the OMB. Rep. CONNOLLY's amendment would have simply evened the playing field and ensured that public interest organizations and other stakeholders are provided the same opportunity for consultation afforded to special interest groups and private industry under this bill.

Over the last four years, President Obama has implemented significant reforms to the rulemaking process. In January 2010, the President signed an Executive Order that required agencies to determine if the benefits of proposed rules are justified considering their cost to society. He required an interagency review of overlapping rules and regulation between agencies that may prevent innovation in the private sector and instituted a policy to allow agencies to consider input from affected public and private stakeholders and experts when developing rules and regulations.

There is also a mechanism in place that already requires agencies to adhere to specific

requirements of Federal law before issuing a rule or regulation. The Administrative Procedure Act, the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA), the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), and the Congressional Review Act all serve the purpose of making sure that agencies are not overstepping their bounds when issuing rules and enforcing existing regulations.

At a time when Congress should be doing everything it can to create jobs and improve the economy, these bills are nothing but a distraction. They are unnecessary and potentially harmful to the public health and safety. I urge my colleagues to oppose each of them.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker on rollcall No. 117, H.R. 499, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

DR. STEVEN R. SWANSON TRIBUTE

HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Steven R. Swanson, a United States Astronaut who will launch on his third trip to the International Space Station (ISS) on March 25 from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. Dr. Swanson will spend six months on the station, serving three months as the ISS Commander.

I'm proud to say that Dr. Swanson lives in Colorado's 3rd Congressional District, in Steamboat Springs, with his wife, Mary and their three children. Dr. Swanson attended the University of Colorado, where he received a degree in Engineering Physics. He has also received both Masters and Doctorate degrees in Computer Science.

Since joining NASA in 1998, Dr. Swanson has led a remarkable career, earning the NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal, the Johnson Space Center Certificate of Accommodation, and the Flight Engineering Award. He travelled on the space shuttle to help assemble the ISS in June of 2007 and again in March of 2009. It is fitting that he now becomes the station's commanding officer.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honor to recognize such a distinguished ambassador of the sciences. I rise today to thank him for his continued service in the name of exploration and congratulate him on his truly remarkable career.

KASSIDY LINDLEY

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Kassidy

Lindley for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Kassidy Lindley is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Kassidy Lindley is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Kassidy Lindley for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

CONDEMNING VIOLATION OF
UKRAINIAN SOVEREIGNTY, INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL
INTEGRITY

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 11, 2014

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution.

Just today, a CNN camera crew reported evidence that Russian troops are literally digging in on the Crimean peninsula, including the installation of minefields along the new, illegal border they have created with the Ukraine. The world community cannot stand idly by in the face of this unprovoked Russian aggression against another sovereign member of the United Nations. The House, by passing this resolution, will be taking an important step towards that end.

There are several provisions in this resolution calling on the new Ukrainian government to implement measures to end political corruption, respect the human rights and civil liberties of ethnic minorities in the Ukraine, and so on. These and other reforms are essential for Ukraine to truly consolidate its revolution and ensure a transition to a truly open, democratic society.

But the people of the Ukraine will find it difficult to maintain their freedom and independence if their largest neighbor continues its illegal occupation of the Crimea, threatens additional areas of eastern Ukraine with invasion, and takes steps—overt and covert—to undermine the new Ukrainian government. The resolution before the House today calls upon the Obama administration to boycott the upcoming G8 summit and work with our partners to expel Russia from the G8. Given that the Russian government refuses to recognize Ukraine's new government and is proceeding with a sham "referendum" on Crimea's future, I believe the Administration must take the steps called for in this resolution. I also call upon the Administration to keep the Congress fully and currently informed on any indications that further Russian aggression may be attempted elsewhere in the Ukraine.

There is one amendment to this resolution that the committee adopted that concerns me, and it involves a call to increase U.S. natural gas exports. Simply, the U.S. does not currently possess the ability to export LNG to